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Okjumié

A STORY FROM
THE LAND OF
MORNING CALM

Ellasur Canter Wagner



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POKJUMIE



KOREAN LADY AND MAID

POKJUMIE

A Story from the Land
of Morning Calm

By

ELLASUE CANTER WAGNER

AUTHOR OF "KIM SU BANG" AND OTHER KOREAN STORIES



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Vol. 1

DEDICATION.

*With love for those whose faith has been my in-
spiration, whose loyalty has been my joy,
and whose life stories have been my
theme, I dedicate this book to
the women of Korea.*

FOREWORD.

BELIEVING that a closer and more intimate knowledge of the lives of the people of Korea will call forth greater sympathy and help for these people, I write this book. I write in the hope that I may bring this people in a land far away nearer to the reader, and that their heart-aches and sorrows may seem more real.

In Korea, as in all the world, it is the voice of Christ that drives away the midnight gloom, the touch of Jesus that brings hope again to aching hearts, the tender love of the Saviour that brings peace to lonely lives in times of despair.

May those who read find in the lives of these people the deep need of our Saviour and echo the prayer of our heart, "Korea for Christ!"

ELLASUE CANTER WAGNER.

SONGDO, KOREA.

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POKJUMIE.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE GLOAMING.

TWILIGHT was falling fast at the close of a perfect day in spring. Under high, shelving cliffs the broad Han River flowed by, calm and majestic. On the placid surface of the water the deepening shadows took on purple tints of night; and here and yonder in the rippling eddies peeped the stars, twinkling and laughing as they seemed to play at hide and seek in the depths of the river.

High above on the wooded fringe of the precipice overlooking the river, twilight still lingered, and in the fading light a woman made her way slowly up the slight hill to the brink. From the style and from the rich material of her garments, one might correctly judge that she was a high-class Korean lady. Her steps had that uncertainty which comes from fatigue

after a long journey afoot. She was young—in fact, scarcely more than a girl. But the face was wan and haggard, and the brilliant beauty for which she was far famed did not show through the delicate features now drawn by pain and suffering. The lovely brown eyes, large and soft, were filled with terror, and she looked from side to side with a shudder into the thick undergrowth where lingering light gave to the shadows weird, fantastic shapes.

At the edge of the cliff she stood and in silence gazed long into the depths far below her. With an attitude of utter dejection and misery, lifting her arms above her head, she clasped her hands until the pink nails tore the tender flesh, while her clear, sweet voice rang out over the quiet waters.

“Woe, woe is me! Surely of all women I am most miserable! Can it be possible that I was a few weeks ago so happy and light-hearted? Yes; I never dreamed of this. Fool! fool that I was! Why should I have felt my position more secure than that of hundreds of oth-

ers of Korea's small wives [concubines]? Yet because he bought me from my father when a little child I dreamed that my husband would treat me differently. Perhaps it was because I reigned supreme in his heart so long that I mistook my place and proudly imagined it would always be thus.

"After all, I am not sorry that I behaved as I did, for O how I hate that painted beauty of a dancing girl that he brought home with him! I see yet her big, insolent black eyes as she looked at me, and the sneer on her face. I do hate her! Yes, I'm glad I struck her in the face when she told me that I was no longer beautiful enough to suit a wealthy man. No doubt she was glad too, for it gave her the opportunity she wanted to make an appeal against me. But I never dreamed that even a dancing girl would be so low as to wound herself and then accuse me of the crime. Ah! I still see the red blood on the white arm and dripping from my knife, which she had picked up from the chest and plunged into her own arm.

When Chang Tab Young came in just after and saw me on the floor, crouching in terror, and heard her ringing accusal that I had tried to murder her, no wonder he believed the falsehood, for I was too surprised and overcome to defend myself. *Eigo! eigo!*¹ If I could just forget those flashing eyes he turned on me—the eyes I love so much, and that once held such a world of tenderness for me! Ever since his face has haunted me as he looked at me then, his eyes angry and set; not one particle of love, but only fierce hate in them when he picked up that long club as though to strike me and said: ‘Go before I kill you, you impudent child of a dog! Get out of my sight, and never let me see you again. Not guilty? Isn’t that knife and blood proof? Where shall you go? What do I care? There are plenty of rich men looking for pretty concubines.’

“That is the bitterest dreg—that he should have thought that I could sink so low. Then

¹*Eigo* is an exclamation of grief and sorrow.

he lifted the club threateningly and cried again :
'Go quickly, I say ; for if you don't I shall call
the slaves and have you beaten within an inch
of your worthless life.'

"In my hopeless agony I had crept up to
him and clasped his feet. But he prized loose
my trembling fingers, and with angry words
thrust me roughly out of the door. O, even
then he could not strike me ! So I came away,
numb and hopeless. Once I looked back and
saw standing in the door the dancing girl, on
her hateful face a leer of triumph. But Chang
Tab Young had turned his back, and was
walking away across the courtyard. I wonder
how soon he will find out his mistake. Then
he will care, for O I know he loved me dearly
once !

"River, river, you look so dark and deep !
All day I have been on my way to you, O river,
for I know not where else to go. Be merciful
to me, river, and give me peace. Quiet this
restless agony of longing and love in my heart ;
then art thou my best and truest friend.

“O stars above, know ye if there be a life beyond the river, and whether that life is worth the living? I am so tired, and I long to be at rest.

“Suppose they should find my body. If he looked into my dead face, would he care? O, the hardest, bitterest suffering of all is that I love him still, and I must continue to love him while I live! Why is it that I cannot forget that face, those eyes, the way the dark hair clings to that noble brow, the turn of the head, that tender smile that used to play around the lips I love?”

Then for a long time the girlish figure sat in perfect silence, her head falling forward and her hands folded in her lap, as though lost in thoughts and loving memories, while fast-falling night was deepening.

Struggling to her feet, she raised her dark eyes to the starry dome above her; and the tense drawn face relaxed into its regular lines of wondrous beauty. Then as she stretched her hands up toward the evening star,

the pale lips faltered: "*Hananim Mopseta!* *Hananim Mopseta* [Great Spirit of all, suffer it not to be]! I know not what thou art, nor where thou art; but I believe that thou dost understand and pity. If I am about to do wrong, forgive me; for I know not what else to do. There is no place left for me on earth, no life but a life of sin and shame, and this I cannot accept. Forgive me and give me peace."

The tired eyes were filled with a new peace. The broad white brow was calm and placid, and on the pallid features there was no sign of the recent storm. She looked not into the dusky depths of the Han River, but up, far away to the bright stars and beyond, as she took a step, then another over the river's brink.

Out of the darkness below there was an answering splash, and from the depths of the dismal forest beyond the river came the faint cry of a lone night bird; then all was still.

CHAPTER II.

THE LITTLE FRIEND.

POKJUMIE the Gentle had passed with halting step and backward glance over the hilltop which cut off the home place from her vision.

The man who, with flushed, angry face, paced up and down the courtyard did not look in the direction which she had taken. His august dignity as the head of the house had been disturbed, his love of peace and quiet had been interrupted. My lord's Oriental ideas of gentility had been shaken, and all this by foolish women's silly quarrels.

The more he thought of this insult to his authority and this breach of etiquette, the more his displeasure and anger grew, and in his fury he yielded to his inclination to speak the thoughts aloud: "Little scoundrel! She objected to my bringing home the dancing girl, did she? And she not even my first wife,

either! Well, she did take authority for her due! What right—what right, I say, could this witch have to question my actions?”

He was fairly shrieking in his fury; and a little slave girl, drawn by curiosity at the loudness of his voice, hid behind the gatepost and peeped in, much surprised to see her usually quiet master in such a rage.

Chang Tab Young spread out his hands, palms upward, and continued in a high-pitched voice to address the apparently empty court, unaware that there was a brown eye at every peephole: “What is Korea coming to, anyway, when such things are allowed? Why, these women will soon be thinking they are equal to their master! Certainly I have not held my household in hand firmly enough. They shall learn that I am master. Hey, you! What are you doing there?” This last question was addressed to the trembling slave girl behind the gate. “Come out of there, you wretch! Eavesdropping on your master! Where are

your manners? You little varmint, I'll teach you some."

By this time the gentleman of wealth had worked himself up into an uncontrollable fury. At his heartstrings, too, was tugging the memory of a little face, white with fear and hopelessness. Over his eyes he passed his hand to shut out the vision of large brown eyes uplifted to his in silent pleading. He must vent his wrath on some one in order to forget.

"Where are all my servants? Su Chun Ah! Su Chun Ah!¹ *E de O na ra!* I say, come here! Do you see that girl? Beat her with forty stripes."

The poor little child (for she was nothing more) was carried from the courtyard, screaming in terror; and soon upon the ears of the enraged master sounded the blows, accented

¹A Korean gentleman never uses his servant's proper name in speaking to his manservant; he uses his little boy name. But for any one except his master to use this name after a slave has his hair put up in the "top-knot" would be an insult.

by loud shrieks of pain. This was a poor soothing balm for his wounded sensibilities, and with rapid strides he hurried to the inner court. "Stop that noise, you little vagabond! Stop it, I say, instantly! Bind a napkin about her mouth and give her forty stripes more."

Then away he strode out of the inclosure, across the rice field and up to the greensward under the chestnut grove beyond, in order to be rid of the disturbances and noises of his home.

After his departure from the court, the excitement continued as his orders were obeyed with little show of mercy. In the midst of the noisy clamor a paper screen door on the right-hand side of a long, narrow veranda was pushed softly back, and out stepped a Korean lady. A glance at the rich dress and small, clear-cut features served to prove her of high class. Her attitude as she stood in the doorway and watched the servants was one of utter indifference and coldness. Having noted the cause of the turmoil and strife, she turned

without a word and with no trace of interest in her face to reënter her apartments. As she turned, a deep cough racked the frail body—a cough which showed that the White Plague had marked her for its own. This woman of some thirty years was the first wife of Chang Tab Young. Ever since she was brought here a bride, twenty years of age, she had been striving to attain the perfect dignity and poise prescribed as the requisite of a high-class Korean lady. Instead of poise she had attained an icy indifference to all about her, which was the cause of great fear and at the same time of unbounded admiration on the part of the servants. There was none who could break through this cool reserve or call forth affection save her only child, a girl of eight. This daughter, which they still called Agie (baby), seemed in turn the only one who bestowed any real love on the “Snow Lady,” as the servants sometimes called her. Agie was a bright little thing, lovable as well as pretty, and the pet of the

whole household. Any suffering, even among dumb animals, caused her real pain.

Now, as the Snow Lady was closing the paper door little Agie bounded across the veranda into the room ahead of her mother and threw herself headlong on the soft comfort spread, Korean fashion, for a bed on the floor. In an abandon of grief she sobbed and cried, and her mother's quiet questioning received no response. After some time she grew more quiet, the convulsive sobs still shaking her little form. Then she sat up, drying her eyes on the sleeve of her bright bodice. "O my *omani* [mother], *omani!* It was just awful! That wicked man beat the poor little Ash Girl until she died."

Little Agie thought that death was the result of the whipping, but the little slave (called Ash Girl because her hair was sunburned to that color) had merely fainted under the torture of the lash.

The Snow Lady yawned indifferently before she replied calmly: "Is that all? I knew

that. The cries of that miserable child awoke me from my nap. I supposed some one must have injured you from the great disturbance you made. My child, how often have I told you that, as the daughter of Chang Tab Young and as the future daughter-in-law of the illustrious Kang family, you must learn that only dignity and self-control are becoming in a lady? Did you ever see me act as you have just done?"

The grief-stricken Agie looked at her lady mother with clear, dry eyes, but a storm was raging in the tender heart. "Yes, mother, I know. But you don't care; you never care. You never care for *anything* but being proper, and I don't want to be a lady ever—no, not ever," and she stamped her tiny foot in proud defiance. "Why," continued the child, "when my little dog died, Ash Girl helped me to bury him, and we both cried." The tears were again coursing down the flushed cheeks, and her hands were clenched. "Ash Girl was good, if

she was a slave; and when I was sick all last summer she carried me on her back."

The child was again shaking from head to foot with noisy sobs, which was distinctly unpleasant for any one of Lady Chang's aversion to all display of feelings. Reaching over to a tiny table and picking up a dainty bit of needle-work, the mother sank back into an easy position and said: "Agie, leave me this minute. Go play and forget all about the troubles of noisy slaves."

Agie cast one glance of rebellious indignation at her mother and departed with the same lightning-like speed that had brought her in a few minutes before. She made her way quickly around to the outer side of the court, thinking that, without doubt, her little friend was dead; for had she not seen the still, white face and the blood-stained dress? There by a huge pine tree she leaned while fear, sorrow, and love wrung her tender heart.

Now, this pine tree was directly in the line of vision of a certain young lady who had been

quite a long time without any diversion. This was the dancing girl. She wanted excitement and craved something quite different from sitting alone in a richly furnished *sarang* (reception room). Things had not turned out exactly to suit her fancy. Certainly she had a right to expect that after Pokjumie's departure my lord would turn his attention to her. By this time she could have charmed away his savage mood with her shining eyes and the graceful movements of the dance. But what could one do when a moody man ran off by himself? So the beauty was not in the best of humor. If the truth must be told, she was in a very bad temper. Seeing now the little girl leaning disconsolately against the tree, she walked across the veranda and moved with a queenly air to the side of the weeping child. Curiosity and cruelty were written on her face as she gave a sharp pull on the long silken braid.

Out of desire for diversion and a natural inclination to worry and tease others, she buried

her face in her arms and began mock sobs and tears in imitation of the child.

As Agie looked up quickly and saw who her tormentor was, her tears dried instantly and her eyes flashed hate and defiance as every feature and even her attitude bespoke a dignity equal to that of her lady mother. Without one word the child stood thus, her young lips curled in scorn, cool, self-possessed, and stern, while the dancing girl leaned sobbing in feigned grief against the gnarled pine tree. Young as Agie was, she hated this woman with all her childish heart. She had heard the servants and the women talk about her, and she knew that all respectable Korean woman scorned one of this class. She knew, too, that the strife and grief of the day were in some way due to this creature.

Whirling suddenly from her position by the tree, the dancing girl turned to Agie and, clasping her roughly by the shoulder, exclaimed: "Why, you are a beauty! What a splendid

dancing girl you would make! Come, I'll teach you a step."

Hate and anger blazed higher in the bright eyes as the child shook herself loose and cried out: "You vile thing! How dare you touch me?"

At these words the sneering black eyes flashed dangerously, and she tauntingly said: "Slow, slowly now, little lady! Do you forget, or perhaps you don't know, that it was I who had that other little slave girl beaten awhile ago? How would you like a little of the same medicine for impudence?" She knew well enough to whom she spoke, but the desire to tease and to torment came with her before regard for truth.

With the dignity and grace of a tiny princess, Agie turned her back and without a word walked into the inner court. The outwitted beauty, with a laughing jeer, reëntered the lonely, quiet *sarang*.

CHAPTER III.

"I MUST SAVE HER."

THE tiny lady lost her manner of avenging princess as she entered the inner court, and, rushing up to an old servant coming from the other side, she cried in her usual impetuous way: "O, say, where is father? Tell me quickly, where *is* father?"

The old servant smiled into the face of the child and, patting the shimmering satin of the black head, replied: "Why, baby, what's your hurry? Where is your father? Let me see. I believe he went over to the chestnut grove."

The old woman smiled indulgently as the child sped away across the paddy field. "Every one loves the darling," she whispered to herself tenderly.

The little feet scampered hurriedly toward the chestnut grove. The path was narrow between the rice fields, and in her hurry she once slipped, and one of her tiny sandals dropped

into the muddy water. But she sped on without a glance at her white-stockinged foot, now without a sandal. Through the thick foliage of the dense trees baby saw the blue silk robes of her father and hastened onward.

When Chang Tab Young caught sight of his little daughter, the stern, fixed expression of his face relaxed. This was his only child, and he loved her devotedly. She sank on the grass by his side and, leaning over, looked without fear into his face. One would not believe that the raging tyrant of an hour ago was the tender, loving father who stroked the head of his little girl with gentle hand while a wealth of love beamed in his eyes. Her little arms were clasped about his neck, and her eyes looked full into his as Agie began solemnly: "Father, she didn't do it. She is good, father. I love her. You ought to have believed her when she said she didn't do it."

The father loosened her tight grip about his neck and, holding her hands in his, said gently: "Little daughter, I know not of whom you

speaking. Can't you talk with less excitement and tell me more clearly what you mean?"

"Well, father, I saw it; I saw it all. I heard Pokjumie crying, and I thought that mean dancing girl was making her cry. I love Pokjumie, father. You know she has been here as long as I have, and she was only a little girl like me when she came."

The man sat up eagerly, all attention now, and said: "Hurry, baby. What is this you saw?"

"Well, I heard Pokjumie crying softly, and I went to the door. It was closed, and I ran my finger through the paper and made a peephole. She was being abused by the dancing girl, who was saying mean things to Pokjumie. She said you didn't love her any more, and that you wanted to get rid of her."

"Yes, yes; go on," the man muttered.

"Well, after awhile that mean thing picked up Pokjumie's big knife lying on the chest and cut her own arm her own self, she did, and"—

The man sprang to his feet. All the features changed again to the angry man of the afternoon as he shook the child. "Quickly, quickly, child; tell me all quickly!"

Agie was not surprised at this change in him. She had expected it. "Then," she said, "you came in the other door and drove poor little Pokjumie away. You dreadful man! And you killed the poor little Ash Girl too."

But the father was not listening to his little judge, who was the only one living who dared tell him of his faults. She was the only one besides Pokjumie who did not fear him. She knew his love and the gentleness of his nature, so she was not afraid to sit in judgment at any time, her rebukes always meeting smiling eyes.

But he was hurrying to the house with rapid, swinging strides while he whispered hoarsely over and over: "I must save her! I must save her! Perhaps it is too late. I saw it in her eyes." His heart was now filled with pain and an agony of fear. He could not shut out the memory of those tender, pleading eyes. "Fool,

fool that I am!" he muttered as he hurried to the house. "If I am only not too late!"

Agie looked after him as he rushed away. Then, scrambling to her feet, she caught the glimmer of the fairy, filmy wings of a butterfly flitting past her, and she turned to chase this beauty. "Father will fix it all right," she murmured as she sped away after the winged will-o'-the-wisp. Childish sorrows never last long, and she had cast on her father's shoulders all her heavy burdens.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEARCH.

CHANG TAB YOUNG was like a raging volcano. He stormed, he swore; and while preparations for the search were being made with all possible speed, every minute seemed like an hour to him. Finally all his men and servants were ready, and he himself led the search for the poor girl that he had driven from his home only a few hours before.

Ten men and two slave women, besides two chair coolies with a silken sedan chair for Pok-jumie to ride in should they find her, constituted the party, with Chang Tab Young at the head on his little gray donkey.

For the first few miles there was no trouble in tracing the lost woman. "Yes, I saw her," lisped the man who was transplanting rice in the field by the roadside. "She took that path,"

and he smiled to himself as the procession passed quickly out of sight among the hills. "Nothing new in runaways. I guessed it when she passed," he muttered as he bent again to his task.

Farther on an old woman washing clothes by the side of a running creek told them of the way Pokjumie had taken.

"Poor dear!" said the old woman to herself as they passed on. She stood with the long stick in her hand with which she beat the clothes to snowy whiteness. Looking after the strange party, her eyes rested on the form of the storming, raging man on the donkey. "Something wrong there. Poor child!" and with a deep sigh she shook out the wet garments in her left hand preparatory to further beating.

"*Eigo! Eigo!*" Chang Tab Young cried. "Am I too late? Hurry men, hurry! It is sun-down." This last was to the weary, dusty men in his wake, who were straining every muscle to keep up with him and the donkey.

The man's eyes were strained and wild, and he repeated over and over: "*Eigo! Eigo!* Suppose I am too late. *Eigo! Eigo!* Too late!"

The women in the search were crying and sobbing aloud, for all of them loved the sweet Pokjumie.

Just after sunset they overtook a coolie with a jiggy,¹ loaded with wood, on his back. Cho, the coolie, put down the jiggy and listened with interest to the eager questions of the gentleman on the aristocratic donkey. His hungry eyes took in the gentleman's silk robes and the richness of the plush-covered chair. "Evidently wealthy people," he thought.

"Yes, I saw such a woman not five minutes ago. She took the left-hand road," he replied with a cunning glitter in his eyes.

"Ha! some money in this for me," he said

¹A rough wooden frame which is strapped to the back, on which are carried various and sundry burdens, from brushwood for fuel to pottery and other ware for sale.

under his breath as he watched the last of the party disappear down the left-hand path. Turning, he sped away at full speed down the road to the right hand—the road that led to the river.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESCUE.

CHO, the coolie, chuckled softly to himself as he sped away toward the river. After awhile he saw, a little distance ahead, among the bushes and shrubbery by the highway, the flutter of a silken dress; then he went more slowly. "Guess there will be more in this than in a jiggy of wood, my lady," he said softly, and the crafty eyes were cruel as well as cunning. "I think my gentleman on that little gray donkey would give much to get you back; and if he doesn't, I know who will, little beauty. Yes, I knew something was wrong when I saw her. Who could not tell by the garb she wore that she was a lady? And what Korean woman would go out or walk out alone on the public highway? Hi! I ought to make enough out of this to get a good rice field and be able to lay the jiggy aside."

Thinking of the delightful prospects ahead, he took his eyes off of the slowly moving figure in front of him for some moments while he did some examples in arithmetic with tiny sticks on the ground, Korean fashion. "Yes, it will take something like twenty thousand *yang*² to buy those fields I want, but I guess she will bring it. Well, where has she gone, anyway?"

The dusky shades of twilight were deepening in the wooded valley, and the figure of the girl had disappeared from the highway in front of him.

As Pokjumie walked along she had no idea of the slinking form far behind her. She was too preoccupied to think of any one following her. Memories filled her heart. Suddenly on her meditations broke the soft murmur of running water. Leaving the highway where it descends the hill to the ferry on the brink of the river, she plunged into the woods in the

¹One *yang* is equal to one cent in American currency, or four cents in Korean currency.

direction whence came the musical notes of the waters.

Cho, the coolie, had lost the trail. He went to the turn in the road and looked down to the ferry. No one was there. She had not had time to descend to the river. Where was she? Perhaps she had seen him and hidden in the woods. So he turned and searched in the direction of the cliff above the river.

Just as Cho was about to give up the search as hopeless he thought he heard a voice. He listened intently. Yes, a soft, murmuring voice came to him. He hurried in the direction whence it came. Listen! What did she say?

“Give, O give me peace!”

These words floated to Cho on the calm evening air. Then, before he could realize what had happened, the sound of a splash in the river below brought a sharp cry from him as he turned and rushed hurriedly down the hill toward the ferry. There, on the little veranda of the hut by the river's brink, the gray-haired

ferryman was nodding over his pipe. His boat was securely moored at the landing. Cho rushed madly by him, jumped into the boat, cut the rope, and pushed the boat into the quiet stream before the ferryman realized that anything had happened.

Not from any desire to save a human life, but for greed of gain would he save this girl. Yes, he would drown her just as readily could the gain come in that way.

A moment after Pokjumie sank for the second time, Cho was there. He saw her as she came to the surface, and plunged into the river. A few masterful strokes, and he was by her side. He lifted the unconscious girl into the boat, clambered in, and with easy strokes made for the landing.

Cho's eyes dwelt on the limp, lifeless form in the bottom of the boat. "We'll bring her around," he nodded. In his cruel eyes shone the crafty, cunning light of unscrupulous desire for gain.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CRISIS.

NOT far back from the green banks of the Han, partly hidden by a clump of trees, was a little mud hut like those generally occupied by the poorest and lowest of Korean peasants. The house was built with one *kang* (a room 8 x 8 feet). The dingy walls were thatched with mud over a structure of sticks and straw rope. The straw thatching on the roof had not been repaired for several years, and its ragged appearance suggested a leaky shelter for the rainy season. Connecting with the house and extending around a small courtyard was a leaning, tottering fence made of brush and sticks, nine feet high—a very meager structure, but serving as a protection from the prying eyes of the public and affording privacy to the woman of the family while at work.

This was the house of Cho, the coolie. His

wife, with the youngest of her four children strapped to her back, was just entering the tiny courtyard with a huge earthen vessel of water balanced on her head. From her soiled clothes and slovenly appearance one could easily judge that she was not at all careful of her appearance. The expression of hardness in her face bespoke ill temper and cruelty. As she entered her domain the three children who had been at play on the road in front of the house followed her; for it was time for the evening meal, and they were hungry. The clothing of the youngest, a boy of two, was only a hair ribbon. His little sister, just two years older, had no ribbon to complete her costume, which consisted of wooden rain shoes many sizes too large. The tiny, naked bodies were grimy, and their hair fell down in unkempt disorder, which was made even worse by the constant scratching and tearing by the little dirty brown hands. The oldest child, a girl of nine, brought up the rear of the unattractive procession. Her clothing was a little more substantial than the atmos-

phere, but so filthy that one could not know its color and texture.

The woman set down her water jar, unstrapped the baby from her back, placed him among the noisy children, and then turned to greet Cho, who at that moment entered the gate.

"Look here!" she cried in a high, angry voice, for Mrs. Cho was one woman of the Orient who had a sharp tongue and a nagging manner with all, her lord included. "I'm tired of this extra burden you brought home. You can never make any money out of that girl, anyway, because she is going to die in spite of all we can do. It's five days now since you took her from the river, and she has never even opened her eyes or showed any sign of life except that queer sort of breathing."

"Dry up! Tend to your own business and obey what I tell you. If you let that girl die and I lose that rice field, I'll kill you. I tell you I will. Don't you hear?"

His voice rose higher and higher, and the

children scampered away in terror. But Mrs. Cho showed no fear. She answered back in the same tone, and soon their voices rose together in trying to outyell each other. After this noisy and fruitless discussion, the rice for the evening meal was served in bowls, and they sat on the steps and on the stones in the yard while they ravenously ate the frugal meal of rice and dried turnip tops.

In the one vile room which composed the dwelling lay a little figure on a pile of rags. The room was filthy beyond description, and everywhere were to be seen the traces of vermin. The room was absolutely empty, without furniture except the scrap of straw matting on the floor.

Mrs. Cho pushed back the paper screen door and entered. In her hand was a bowl of dirty-looking fluid. "I guess she will have to eat or she will die," she said; for her husband's words had made some impression on her, and no food had passed the pale lips of the girl since she was brought to the home. Mrs. Cho

took a brass spoon, and drop by drop forced a few spoonfuls between the tightly shut teeth. Cho entered also and, stepping over the children, who were already asleep on the floor, began to unfold his comfort preparatory to his night's rest on the floor, as is the custom of Koreans of all classes.

"Her clothes were surely lovely," said the woman with a sigh. "I washed them and dried them to-day, and they look like new."

"It's well you did. She will need them before long, and she has to look like a lady. Her future depends upon it, and she don't look it much now in your old dirty clothes," and he cast a scornful glance at the girl.

Truly she looked little like the trim, dainty Pokjumie of Chang Tab Young's household. Nevertheless, even in this garb the delicate features and refinement of her face shone forth. One would have known instantly that she did not belong in these surroundings, and could no more thrive here than could a pure white lily live in the vileness of that yard.

Soon the family was settled for the night, the flickering, spluttering candle was blown out, and all was quiet save for the deep breathing of the children.

The stranger in their midst sighed and turned. "O river," she murmured softly, "you look so calm and peaceful! Give peace and rest!" Then in her delirium the scene changed, and in a stronger voice she begged her husband not to send her away. "Beloved! beloved! I know that you love me. I know it. Don't send me away!"

Those near her were deaf to the sweet, pleading voice; and he who would have given his life to have been able to answer her was walking the floor in desperation and anguish, unwilling to believe that his Pokjumie was really lost to him.

CHAPTER VII.

DESPAIR.

THE long, weary search for his lost wife had been fruitless, and after many days of anxiety, fear, and torture Chang Tab Young had given it up, though he still sent the servants and coolies out to look for the lost one.

Two months of suspense and despair, which seemed like an eternity, had passed, and no hope was in his burdened heart. Now all day he sat on the purple silk cushion in the *sarang* with his head on his breast, or walked beneath the chestnut trees; and not even his little daughter, with her bright chatter, could bring a smile to his haggard face.

The dancing girl was highly indignant and dissatisfied. She did not like this state of affairs. The master had not abused nor scolded her for the part she took in Pokjumie's departure. She would have been able to combat

any verbal chastisement, she thought; but he had treated her with utter, silent contempt, as though she did not exist. His life was now concentrated on one object.

In order to drown the thoughts that crowded upon him and to set aside that fearful self-condemnation, was he not pardonable for taking a bit of the poppy weed now and then in his despair?

CHAPTER VIII.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

THE Snow Lady was passing away. Her suffering was very slight, and her going away was truly like the quiet, unobtrusive melting of the snow in the winter. To the last she retained her dignity and ideas of propriety.

Agie had been sitting by her side all the long August afternoon, fanning her and brushing away the flies. The child knew that her mother was ill, but little guessed to what extent; for no one who was suffering would look so calm and peaceful.

Outside in the courtyard large bushes of fragrant blossoms attracted the bees, and their lazy droning was the only sound that fell on the hot, sultry air.

The little girl had fallen asleep, and on awaking started forward in surprise on finding her mother's large, bright eyes fixed upon her.

"What is it, mother? Do you want anything?"

"No; nothing, little daughter. Sit still. I only want to talk to you awhile, for I'm going away."

"Going away, mother? Why, you can't go now; you are sick. Wait until you are well, and then you can go."

"I don't mean that, my child; but I am going to leave this world. I feel and know that the end is at hand."

The child sprang to her feet in surprise and terror. "No, no! Not that!" she wailed. Then in her impetuous way she threw herself beside her mother and gave way to her stormy grief. "O mother, mother! Where are you going? I am so afraid! Will they call the sorceress to drive away the evil spirits? Will the spirits carry you away? *Eigo! Eigo!* I am so afraid!"

"No. Unlike most Korean women, I have never taken an interest in demon worship. Once I was afraid to die. Ah! yes, I was

afraid. I saw an old servant die amid the clamoring of the sorcerer's gongs; I heard her shrieks of despair. How my soul shrank back in fear from the dark unknown and the awful spirits that would meet me there! Yes, yes; I, too, was afraid then. But one day a woman came in here and talked to me awhile. She left me a sheet of paper with printing on it [a leaflet]. This I kept carefully and read often. This said that Hananium, the Great Spirit of heaven, made all things, and that he was our Father, that he loves us and wants us to be good. So he sent his Son to this world to save us. This paper said, too, that we need not fear the evil spirits if we trust in Hananium and Yäsu."

The weak voice had sunk to a whisper now, and Agie bent her head to hear.

"Now I am not afraid. I have not been good, but I did the best I knew. Here is that paper. Keep it and do not fear." She thrust into the girl's hand a worn yellow paper. "Call your father," she continued, and then sank back on the pallet exhausted.

Chang Tab Young returned with his daughter with hurried footsteps. There had never been any love between these two. Married by their parents when but children, they had grown up together—together, yet apart. The husband had always the utmost respect for his wife and even admiration for the ability with which she managed the servants and the household affairs. She had reached the pinnacle of calm dignity and even gentleness—the Korean ideal. He was proud of his wife, as he was of his ancestral tablets.

Now as he sat beside her in the dying hour he saw a side of her character that he had not before seen revealed. There in the quiet room he sat, slowly waving to and fro the fan in one hand, while with the other he stroked the black head with gentle, soothing touch. Thus they sat alone; for Agie had run away to a sheltered nook in the old chestnut grove to face her troubles alone, as was her custom.

The voice of the sick woman was very weak now. Even the whispered tones were growing

fainter, and he bent his head low above her to catch every word.

"I am dying, and I have a last request to make. Do not let them make any devil worship after my death for me. I do not believe in it. But have a very quiet funeral, and carry me to the grave in peace." She was slipping away, and each word came lower and lower and with more difficulty. "I—am—not—afraid. Ask—Agie. Now—*pe—na—e, kae se o*" (abide in peace).

The white lids fluttered, the clasped hands fell apart; then all was still save for the deep sobs of the man.

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They honored the desires of the Snow Lady by granting her request; and with little display and no devil worship she was laid to rest, to the surprise and disgust of pageant-loving neighbors and relatives.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIPLOMAT.

NOT long after this Chang Tab Young was forced to take cognizance of the dancing girl. The first wife and mistress of the house was dead; Pokjumie, the "small wife," was gone (Was she dead too? Who could know?); and the master was too deep in his own sorrows to notice household affairs.

The dancing girl had high aspirations and ambitions; and should she be recognized as mistress and succeed in establishing herself in authority over the servants even by usurpation, perhaps the master also in time would acknowledge her as head of the household. Yes, then she would punish some of her enemies.

Chang Tab Young, in his absorption and ever-increasing grief, did not notice how things were drifting; but each passing day added to

his disgust and hatred for the painted beauty. She was a born politician, and by scheming and bribing she had managed to some extent to attain power over the servants. They were distrustful of her and hated her; but the master did not interfere, and they patiently awaited future developments.

One day, coming quietly into the court, he heard his little girl's childish treble voice raised in angry tones, and he stopped behind the gate to listen.

"I shall tell my father if you touch me."

Then came deeper tones, tense but low: "What of that? Am I not mistress here? I have stood all the impudence and disobedience that I shall take from you. One more word and you shall pay for it."

The father was roused at last to a knowledge of the true state of affairs at home. Furiously indignant, he strode into their midst, and with a low "Follow me" to the dancing girl turned with quick step to the *sarang*.

The meaning of past scenes, which he had

been too absorbed to notice, flashed across his awakened mind. "What does this mean?" he demanded hoarsely.

The diplomat noted that her time for action had come. At last he had taken notice of her, and here was her opportunity. She saw, too, that her hold was very loose, and that she must play carefully and cast the dice with deliberation. She was not lacking in intelligence or cunning, and she realized that her ambitions for the future and all her hopes would be blasted if she were not very subtle. So she staked all on one perilous but diplomatic move. At this blunt, straightforward questioning she smiled sweetly at him, sank gracefully upon the soft cushion on the floor, and replied with languid ease: "Well, my lord, you see I have had some trouble in establishing my authority among the servants. As mistress here I deem it wise to be firm though gracious."

The man stood before her, his flashing eyes and erect shoulders speaking of deep feeling. Her grace and the soft lines of beauty he did

not see. Instead he saw only the cause of his great loss and sorrow.

“You mistress of my house? Indeed! To bring you here as a pretty plaything was quite a different matter. Listen. I shall instruct the servants at once that no one is to take an order from you. My daughter I shall acknowledge as ~~the~~ head of this house. You are—*nothing!*” His voice was low, but the tone bespoke intense anger which might blaze forth like a volcano at any time. Then without another word he turned and walked slowly away.

That night when all the world was asleep a white-veiled figure slipped quietly out of the gate. It was the dancing girl. Her love for Chang Tab Young, born of ambition, fed by the desire to rule and the glamour of wealth, was easily put aside. Finding that her desires and ambitions were doomed, and refusing to be humiliated by him in the manner he had declared, she preferred to leave. This was not the life suited to one of her attainments and accomplishments.

The moonlight revealed a covered chair awaiting her around the turn of the road. She entered and was borne away and out of the life of Chang Tab Young forever. Whither? Ah! that is another story.

CHAPTER X.

NEW PLANS.

THE months that had passed in the house of Cho had been full of unutterable woe for Pokjumie. Yes, oblivion would have been preferable. It would even have been paradise compared to the life here, amid the sordid surroundings, the atmosphere of strife and disorder. But the filth and misery were overshadowed by her grief and mental suffering.

Slowly from the brink of the dark river of death she had come back to life. Her agony when she found out her fate was pitiful. She begged, she pleaded, and raved. Entreaty and demand met alike the frigid silence of the Chos. Then, feeling that her case was hopeless, she quietly awaited the inevitable.

For days she lay upon the wretched pallet in the miserable, dingy little room without uttering one word except to refuse the food

brought to her. Death she did not fear now, but life she could not face.

Cho finally saw whither things were drifting, and threatened to beat her if she would not eat. She looked so weak and white, however, that finally he decided to force her to eat. He bound the tiny, childlike hands, and, holding her in a firm grip, prized open her mouth while his wife fed her *meme*, or strained rice porridge.

Strange to say, her beauty was as striking as ever. It shone forth amid her surroundings like the shimmering sheen of a lost pearl in a muddy pathway.

Cho became quite uneasy, for he feared that if he delayed he might lose his prize. Still his plans were somewhat confused. The one to whom she belonged, her husband, was the one to whom he first intended to return her in exchange for twenty thousand *yang*. But his cowardly conscience was uneasy, and he had been afraid to do this. Was Chang Tab Young not a man of power and of great wealth? Yes, and of temper too, so report said. If he found

that Cho had purposely put him on the wrong trail in order to receive the reward, might he not punish instead of reward? Then, too, from her delirious babbling he understood that her husband had driven her away. "Perhaps," thought Cho, "he does not want her back home, as he forced her to leave; and he certainly seemed angry that day. It will be surer and safer for me to find another purchaser. Now, there is Na Sung Mung. He is rich. I'll try him."

CHAPTER XI.

A PENDING BATTLE AVERTED.

A STRANGE procession was coming down the hot, dusty lane toward the house of Cho, the coolie. In a Korean chair carried by two strong men rode a lady who was unquestionably a foreigner. She was an American missionary. Following her was a chair very much like her own. In this was a native Bible woman. Behind this was a queer-looking little pony, meek in appearance, but not in nature. Piled up on the pony on both sides and high on his back were all manner of articles for the missionary's comfort. In one large box on the left-hand side were packed bedding and a few necessary articles of clothing. On the other side, a box of like size and appearance contained food sufficient for a three weeks' trip by the addition of rice and eggs, which could be bought along the way. On the pony's back were piled a cot, an um-

rella, and sundry bundles and parcels. At the side of the cot was tied a small stew cup. The tiny animal was barely visible under his enormous load, and from the expression of his funny little face one might judge that he was conscious of his ridiculous appearance. As rear guard came one who was of great importance. This was a half-grown lad who served as "chief cook and bottle washer," and who considered himself the protector of the *pucen* (lady) and general in chief of the expedition. Was it not he who bargained for the rice and eggs along the way? Was it not he who made plans for stopping places and looked after things generally? The procession stopped near the house of Cho for rest and refreshment. The coolies placed the chairs on the ground and fell down on the cool grass by the roadside to indulge in the comfort of a smoke. The ladies emerged from their chairs and stood looking about on the surrounding lavish display of nature's beauty.

The missionary was low of stature and

plump. She had been in Korea more than ten years, and had learned not only the language, but the manners and customs of the people. Those natives who knew her well felt that she was not a foreigner, but one of themselves. She loved them and gave herself in never-tiring service to them; and in return they gave her their respect, honor, and love.

She called the boy, the "prime minister," to her and said to him: "It is three o'clock, and I am hungry. The coolies and the rest of you had your dinners back at the inn. Now I shall take mine. After you have made the charcoal fire in the brazier, heat some water for my tea. This, with a can of those beans and some crackers, will be fine, and I shall eat under that lovely big tree yonder."

The boy departed to do her bidding, and the *pueen* turned her attention to the queer group which surrounded her. Mrs. Cho and the children, having watched with much interest and curiosity the coming of the visitor, had emerged from the brushwood inclosure and

proceeded to investigate. Questions without number were poured forth, all of which were patiently answered at length. Then the visitor turned tactfully to the message of the gospel. However, Mrs. Cho was not inclined to be interested in this talk, and turned her eyes to the queer food in preparation, leaving the *pueen* to talk to her wide-eyed, open-mouthed offspring.

The "prime minister" was not so patient as his mistress, and, turning from the smoking brazier, he yelled: "Take your finger out of that! Haven't you any manners?"

This was to Mrs. Cho, who with a very grimy forefinger was tasting the beans from an open tin can. That was one thing the boy could not endure, for he was a model of cleanliness, in principle at least.

The lady came up in time to prevent a scene, and with friendly gentleness asked: "Mother, can you tell us where to find the spring?"

The angry scowl on the woman's face passed away as she replied: "Yes, yes; certainly. Let me bring the water."

No sooner had she gone around the turn of the hill toward the spring than the pale, beautiful girl standing behind the dirty, naked children seemed to take on new life and interest. With longing eyes she took in every line of the foreign lady's sweet face, and saw behind the calm blue eyes the deep peace and beauty of a life given to Christ. In a few seconds the girl had made up her mind that she could and would trust this lady. With trembling limbs she made her way past the children, and before the quiet little *pueen* knew what had happened she had thrown herself on her knees at her feet and was sobbing out her pitiful story.

The missionary was strangely touched by the recital, and she did not doubt its truth; for, alas! it is not an unusual story that she told. Tears were streaming down her face as she put her arms about the frail, trembling girl and strove to comfort her.

Just then Mrs. Cho came running up, all excitement and concern. "O *pueen*, did she hurt

you? I forgot about her when I left," which last was true enough. "She is crazy, just as crazy as can be. Sometimes she even imagines that she is a rich man's wife. She is my niece, and I ought to keep her locked up for the safety of the public."

The look of wild despair in the girl's eyes half confirmed the woman's words, but the dainty features bore no trace of relationship to the coarse ugliness of Mrs. Cho.

Mrs. Cho lifted her rough voice to a howl: "Cho Su Bang! Cho Su Bang" (Mr. Cho)! This she repeated again and again while the girl knelt in silent terror at the foreign lady's feet. With shaking hand the missionary stroked the bowed head, feeling her helplessness but offering silent prayers for guidance and strength.

Finally, in response to the woman's loud cries for him, Cho appeared. He came running as fast as he could down the road, with his jiggy on his back. Then, panting for

breath and staring with astonishment, he stood watching the group.

"This child is raving crazy again, and I feared that she might injure the foreign lady," said his wife.

He took the cue in silence, and, putting down the jiggy from his back, untied the strong straw rope which held the wood on the jiggy. The cunning eyes cast a look of hatred and suspicion toward the foreign woman; then without a word he approached the agitated girl. Quickly and deftly he bound her with the cruel rope, and with strong, rough hands he raised her up and saw that she had fainted. Then, lifting the limp form to his shoulder, he carried the unconscious girl toward the house.

The *pueen* stood amazed, watching him enter the little court, and then started to follow.

But the "prime minister" clutched her arm in terror. "No, no, *pueen*; don't go there! Didn't you see his eyes? He will kill you sure. He is a bad man, very bad, and you could do nothing."

The Bible woman also made her entreaties in almost the same words.

"But maybe I could buy her," said the missionary.

"No," said the boy. "Where is the money? You said at noon that we scarcely had money enough left to buy rice."

The little woman saw the hopelessness of the situation, but she was not the kind to sit and weep until she had first done all she could. So with determined step she made her way to the house. The rude gate to the court was closed and barred. "*Moon yae ra chu si o*" (Give the door to be opened), she called again and again, but no response came from beyond the closed door. After a long while she turned sorrowfully and went back to the chairs.

The boy had hurriedly repacked, and everything was in readiness to go on. All had forgotten that *pueen* had not eaten since morning.

The boy came forward and said: "*Pueen*, your life is at stake. We must move on. I see that man in the bushes back there, and he

would kill us all. Shall we fight? Here are the four coolies and I. We shall fight if you say so."

"No; we must not do that. I suppose we should go on. But O that poor child!" She entered her chair almost heartsick and crossed the river to find a night's lodging somewhere and, perchance, other sad lives and other broken hearts.

CHAPTER XII.

A BARGAIN.

CHO realized that he must not lose any time, for each day held unknown and unexpected dangers. Now, as he made his way with some anxiety to the house of Na Sung Mung the Wealthy, it was with fierce determination to drive a hard bargain in return for all the expense and trouble of keeping the girl so long. The servant showed him into the *sarang*, where the great man sat on the floor, his feet doubled under him on the flat satin cushion. His beady, cruel eyes, set close together, resembled those of his kinsman, the pig. The heavy jaws and expression, the features and general contour of his face showed plainly the sensual, bestial nature. Every day was given to the invention of new pleasures to gratify him. All his wealth he would squander to find new joys. In spite of all this, life was growing tiresome, and he longed for some new diversion.

The man now ushered into his presence might have some new plan of interest. So, considering his rank, the welcome Cho received might have been considered cordial. But since Cho's position was lowly, he must remain standing in the presence of the great man. He was not long in stating his mission, for he knew the character of the man before him and the probability that if he failed to interest him he might be cast out. "O great and mighty man of valor, I hear that as a judge of beauty there are few to equal and none to excel you! Therefore I have something to say to you that will be of interest."

The eyes of the fat beast before him took on new light, but he replied indifferently: "Say on, then."

"I have in my house one whose beauty and accomplishments would be a delight to your heart."

"Your daughter?" he inquired with a sneer.

"No, not my daughter; merely a kinswoman. Her husband being dead, she was thrown upon my house for support, and I am a poor man."

"O!" sighed Na the Wealthy. But unbelief showed in his face as he said: "Come, now. Tell the truth. I know you. If there is a lovely woman in your house, you stole her in some way. She is no relation of yours."

Cho smiled an acquiescence, and with arched brows answered: "Well, your excellency, what difference does that make? She is there; that is the point. She is very beautiful, and what more do you ask? She is well worth fifty thousand *yang*."

The man of wealth seemed to consider this a great joke, and the audacity of Cho pleased him vastly. Clapping his hands together, he roared with laughter until red in the face. Then with a great effort he pulled himself together as he said: "Well, my good man, you are a wonder. Now, what of the price for the raving beauty?"

"My lord, fifty thousand *yang* is a mean price, the lowest possible. Her large, tender brown eyes fairly melt my hardened heart. She is quite coy and pretends to be very shy,

but give her time and she will get over that. Her skin is of the softness and color of the apple blossoms. In the dusky shadows of the dark hair linger all the charms of midnight, and no tongue can describe the dainty beauty and fairy grace of her form."

"You are crazy, man! Who ever heard of such a price? I'll give ten thousand *yang*, no more," and he brought down his hand with a resounding blow on the table near by.

At this Cho turned away with disgust and walked to the door; but a low laugh caused him to turn back to squabble and barter an hour longer for the honor, yea, the life of an innocent, pure woman.

After a heated discussion and much repetition of the personal charms and merits of the victim, the bargain was closed at twenty thousand *yang*, the girl to come in a closed chair which Na Sung Mung should provide and send the following day, the money to be paid to Cho on sight of the girl.

CHAPTER XIII.

POPPY DREAMS.

THE bright September sun at midday looked down on the fast-closed doors and windows of Chang Tab Young's *sarang*. He still slept and dreamed sweet poppy dreams.

A faithful manservant crossed the court, bearing the low table with his master's noon-day meal. Noiselessly he pushed back the paper door and, putting off his straw sandals, entered the darkened room. His master had just waked up and still sat on the satin quilt, his face hidden in his shaking hands. He looked up at the servant's cheery greeting, but did not answer. The face bore the marks of suffering. The unhealthy yellow tint of the skin and the sunken eyes showed the ravages of opium.

The man put down his burden and, while he arranged the food and chopsticks on the table,

said: "Your excellency, you have eaten nothing since yesterday. Will you not taste this delicious *kooksu*, this *kimchi* too? It's from your aunt's house, and is very fine."

The one to whom this was addressed did not hear. He was pacing up and down the room with nervous tread. His eyes had an expression of dull, haunting pain which was but a reflection of the gnawing agony in his heart. His long, thin hands were clenched tightly. This craving and fearful pain could be quenched by but one thing; he cared for nothing else—only the poppy weed.

"Su Chuni, bring me that pipe and that jar."

"O master, won't you eat a little, just a little, first?"

The tone was one of real concern and anxiety. But the food was unnoticed, and as he reclined again on the couch he panted: "My pipe! my pipe! Take away that sickening food!"

The pipe and opium were brought, and with tremulous haste his uncertain fingers strove with the bitter weed to hurry into the hands of

Morpheus. One nervous hand held the wicked-looking little pipe, the other fumbled among the articles on the table by his side for the precious opium, while the sorrowful old servant took the untouched food, closed the door behind him, and left the man alone in the darkened room to dream his poppy dreams.

CHAPTER XIV.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.

THE morning for Pokjumie's departure was at hand. Mrs. Cho, with little of gentleness and with evident enjoyment, confided to her the impending doom. "And now," said she in conclusion, "don't look so woebegone. Be sensible and think of the wealth and lovely clothes at your disposal. You are foolish. Come, cheer up now. We don't want any such long-faced brides. Here are your own clothes all nicely fixed for you. Dress yourself, and when I return I want to see a brighter face," and she left the girl alone while she prepared the morning rice.

Hopelessness and despair Pokjumie had known before, but now the helpless girl sat as if petrified. She did not feel, she did not think, but sat in a dazed condition, with bowed head and clenched hands, in the midst of the disorder and filth of the room. Then, as

though a voice had spoken to her, came clearly back to memory the beautiful words she had heard from the foreign lady—the only words she remembered: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” She had said they were Jesus’s words, and over and over the trembling lips repeated them.

When Mrs. Cho returned after about an hour, she exclaimed in surprise on finding Pokjumie in just the position in which she had left her, the bright silk clothes by her side.

“Well, I suppose I’ll have to dress you myself. Get up!” and she shook her roughly.

The abundant hair was combed in a way that at other times would have caused tears of pain; but to this and to the process of being robed the girl submitted with the passiveness and silence of a marble statue.

“There is the chair,” cried Mrs. Cho. “We must not keep them waiting. One more touch and we are through.”

Then from the depths of a chest she brought forth white paint and vermilion to enhance the victim's beauty. Face, hands, and neck were treated to a coat of white, which gave the girl more of the unnatural pallor of the marble figure which she already resembled. The vermilion dye was then applied in three round spots—one on each cheek and one in the center of the forehead.

Cho was called in to view the handiwork, and pronounced it good. Then the painted, trembling girl was half led, half carried to the chair.

This chair, sent by Na Sung Mung, was covered with bright red and green silk, and was such as is used by all wealthy ladies. The chair was carried by two coolies dressed in blue uniforms, and on each side walked two stout slave women. Cho, with a grin of satisfaction on his face, brought up the rear of the procession.

Na Sung Mung stood at the door of his *sarang* as the chair approached. His face had

lost the expression of tired indifference, and the beady, swine-like eyes shone with the delight of anticipation.

The chair was placed on the narrow veranda, and a slave woman lifted its swinging door.

It was the customary and orthodox thing for the bride to be shy. It was even to be expected that she would have to be almost carried by the two women who led her into the room. Na was delighted with Pokjumie's manner and charmed by her beauty. As she hopelessly sank down on the cushions in the corner to which they had led her, she kept her eyes closed in fear of what would meet her sight.

One of the women whispered as they left the room: "How lovely she is! and what lovely manners! Did you notice how she kept her eyes closed and bowed her head? I believe she is a lady that man Cho has stolen. She doesn't look common, like that family."

Cho received his hard-earned twenty thousand *yang* and departed, while Na reëntered the *sarang* where was the new toy and treasure that he now felt he owned, soul and body.

Throwing himself down on the cushion in the center of the room, he turned his head toward the corner where sat the trembling girl, who was now thoroughly alive to her impending danger. In her heart she was offering the prayer: "O Jesus of the Christians' Bible, help me now! Help me now!"

With his bloodshot eyes, the half-drunken wretch leered at her with a frightful expression of features, which was meant as a gentle, reassuring smile, as he said: "Come, little one. Don't be so shy. I need entertainment. You have been a model of propriety and grace, but this is the time to drop your dignity. Come here and rub my aching head with those pretty white hands."

The "little one" did not move. Instead she sat with downcast eyes in breathless, silent horror.

Seeing that she would make no move, Na arose with difficulty, and with a harsh, grating laugh started toward the place where she sat shrinking and trembling. She sprang to her

feet and retreated a step, while she looked at him for the first time, her eyes dilating with fear and disgust. As her eyes met his he was conscious of a most delicious thrill. "O, you are superb, my beauty!" he said, and laid a rough hand on her shoulder.

But she was as quick and lithe as a cat, and, urged by the instinct of self-protection, she was in full command of all her powers. Before he realized what had happened, he was wiping the blood from his face, where long, red marks showed that her nails had torn the flesh.

In dismay he retreated, and the hate and cunning light in the narrowing eyes told plainly that he would make life hard for her.

Going to the door, the enraged Na called two servants. "Here," he said, "carry this little tiger to the chamber of corpses,¹ and lock her

¹The interment of the dead among the middle classes is usually on the fifth, seventh, or ninth day after death, but in the case of high officials and heads of wealthy families it is an honor to the departed to keep the corpse

up there until she is taught some manners. You ungrateful thing! Take her away, and give her nothing to eat or drink until she repents."

With disappointment and chagrin Na returned to his wine cups, mumbling threats and curses upon the "beautiful tiger."

in a room of the house for three months. In the case of royalty the time is never less than six months, which time allows opportunity to make elaborate preparation for the funeral. The art of embalming is not known among the Koreans, and so the room where these bodies are kept is noisome and repulsive in the extreme. The taint and odor always cling to the walls.

CHAPTER XV.

“NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I
UNTO YOU.”

THE foul room into which the half-fainting Pokjumie was thrust was the place in which the corpse of Na Sung Mung's father had been kept during the three months between death and burial. Only one possessed of diabolical cruelty could have conceived such a plan of punishing a helpless victim. As she sank down on the bare stone floor, she realized the character of her gruesome surroundings. But even this held no terrors for her now. And as she heard the men outside close the ponderous wooden door, so great was the relief from the tension of the past few hours that tears—the first that she had shed for many weeks—came to her burning eyes.

This death chamber had been closed for several years; the roof was in need of repairs, and during the long rainy season, which

had just closed, the rain had beaten in through the dilapidated shelter. Damp, hot, and almost saturated with a sickening odor, the air was all but stifling; and the sobbing girl raised herself from the floor and groped about in the darkness for the window, hoping to find a hole sufficient to admit a breath of fresh air. Finding at last the tough paper screening (the window), she tore it away with feverish haste. The heavy outside shutter, made of one thick piece of plank, was securely fastened, but did not fit closely, and through the cracks along the outer edges came the blessed pure, fresh air from out of doors.

That long, black night seemed like an eternity. Would it never pass? About midnight, as Pokjumie sat with her face pressed against the crack in the low window, she gave a startled exclamation at a certain memory. Had she not prayed to Jesus of the Christians' Bible to save her? He had saved her from the peril of that moment. Would he not save her from this?

“Yes, yes! I believe he will. ‘Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’ That was meant for us, and that lady said for me too. I shall try to trust him.”

A sweet comfort and rest stole into her tortured heart, and that peace which is not given by the world filled her soul. The tired eyelids drooped, and she slept.

Early the next morning there was a heavy step outside the door; and then a man’s voice, the voice of Na, shouted: “Hey there, little tiger beauty! Are you awake? Better come out and enjoy the fresh morning air. Are you sorry for your wickedness last night? I will forgive you. Are you ready to come forth?”

But no answer came from the closed room. Finally he walked away with growing anger and the resolution to make her pay for her foolish stubbornness.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GLEAM OF HOPE.

CHANG TAB YOUNG had come at last to realize the power of the opium fiend over him and his consequent danger. When first he had used the treacherous drug, it was with the certain knowledge that he could stop at any time he wished. Later he thought less about stopping and more about the enjoyment of the smoking, until finally, with great fear, the truth flashed across his mind that he could not quit the opium, though it was sapping his very life. His will was no longer his own; he was a slave, a slave bound hand and foot.

His mind was now keenly alive to his danger, as he was using large amounts of the stuff and knew that his life would pay the penalty if he did not stop the smoking.

When he thought of Pokjumie it was with torturing remorse. Perhaps, after all, he

might have found her had he continued his search; but instead he had lain on his satin couch and dreamed poppy dreams, while she—O God, where was she?

Su Chunie, coming a little later to bring his master's breakfast, found him pacing wildly up and down his room. "I am no longer a man," he wailed in despair. "I am a slave—a slave! I cannot do as I would. O, fool that I was to touch the accursed stuff!"

The faithful servant stood in a sorrowful attitude, with bowed head, listening to these words and thinking how he might help his master. He knew that his master's strong point was his sense of honor in relation to his ancestors, as becomes one of the followers of Confucius. If he could only get his master to make a vow the breaking of which would disgrace his ancestors, he might overcome the dreadful habit. "Master," he cried, "if you smoke another pipe of opium, you are the son of a dog."

Chang turned angry, burning eyes on the

man, and then over him flashed the thought of a possible release by vow. "Yes, yes; you are right," he answered. "If I smoke any more, I am the son of a dog." Then slowly, deliberately, and with great solemnity he repeated: "I am the son of a dog."

"Come, now," said he to Su Chunie, "let us go to the tablet house, and before my father's tablet and the tablets of my ancestors I will make this vow."

Sacrificial food was brought and placed before the tablets, and the ancestors were honored by worship. Taking a brush and dipping it into the ink which the servant prepared, he wrote on the white walls of the room: "If I smoke opium again, I am the son of a dog." Then he continued: "I cannot, I will not disgrace my ancestors." This he said slowly and thoughtfully as he retraced his way with failing strength down the hill to his *sarang*.

Then commenced the long, fierce battle. The bitterness of death laid hold on him. Death would have been relief from this gnawing pain

and anguish. For hours the fight continued. He felt that he was losing his mind, and the unsatisfied craving and desire which filled his whole being cried out for one thing—yea, he would give life itself to have one pipe. The fierce torture of his soul called for action. He could not sit quietly; he could not enter the house. Wildly he walked up and down under the willows in front of the *sarang*. Having stood it as long as human strength was able, he turned his faltering steps toward the *sarang* and entered the room. His wild eyes had almost lost the light of reason and, blood red, the balls seemed bursting from their sockets. His hands clutched wildly in the direction of the little table which held the precious burden of opium. But while his eyes were held by the sight of the opiate, and his hands were reaching to grasp it, his will would not yield. He took a step backward and cast a glance over his shoulder toward the little house which held the tablets of his ancestors. With a cry of agony he turned and fled from the room, and, throw-

ing himself full length under the trees, deep into the soft earth he dug his long, yellow fingers, and bit and tore the grass in his mouth. His whole body seemed burning up with pain, and his mind was crazed for one whiff of poppy smoke. Between cries of anguish he growled and snarled like a wild animal. Alas! it was too late to cure himself of the habit which was his master. No human will could now, without the aid of drugs, conquer this controlling fiend. If the opiate were removed from him at once just at this crisis, no doubt his life or reason would pay the penalty.

There among the high grasses he writhed like a tortured animal for long hours, each of which was like an age. Finally, when the strong will of the man, who had been a man indeed, was entirely broken, he struggled to his feet and, staggering from side to side, falling every few steps, reached the veranda at last, and a cry of joy broke from his lips at the sight of the little table beyond the door. The last bit of his strength was spent when he

reached the table. Trembling and sobbing, he fell down beside it. With hands that shook so that he could not make them do his bidding he strove to prepare the pipe, stopping many times during the simple operation to rest, while incoherent, senseless jabberings fell from his lips.

Leaning back, taking deep draughts of the pipe, he forgot his recent fight. Rest, peace, joy filled his heart. "Ah, how sweet! What a fool to try to live without it!"

Thus slowly, surely he was wafted to lands Elysian.

.

Su Chunie was greatly distressed at his master's failure. However, the next morning there was a new gleam of hope in his face as he ushered a friend of Chang Tab Young's into his apartment soon after he waked up.

The sorrow and sense of defeat were weighing upon Chang's heart, and the lack of the drug was beginning again its ravishing torments. Greeting the old-time comrade of his

boyhood, and looking up into the kind, sympathetic face, he burst into tears and sobs, unbecoming, as he thought, in a man.

After an hour of quiet talk and words of comfort, the newcomer said: "Now I understand your trouble fully, and I know just how you feel. I myself was once in the remorseless grip of the opium fiend."

"You, my friend? But now—are you now? Do you still use it? You don't look it. How did you break it?"

Thus the questions poured out in a torrent, and the same light that had shone in Su Chunie's face now lighted the dim eyes of Chang as he grasped his friend's hand.

"Yes, listen; I will tell you all. A few months ago I was as bad as you. I know it all. I will make a short story of it. Well, I heard of a wonderful doctor in Songdo who could cure me. I went to him, and I am a well man and my own master to-day. After coming home some one told me that you were in the hands of the same fiend, and I have come

purposely to tell you of this doctor and what he did for me. I believe he can do the same for you."

Chang had risen to his feet, and now stood trembling with eager expectation, questioning his friend.

Before many hours Chang Tab Young and his retinue of servants were on their way to the city beyond the mountains, and in the bosom of the sufferer were burning the fires of a new hope.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOCTOR.

EVERY morning and evening for three days Na the Cruel had gone to Pokjumie's door and made the same inquiry, receiving always the same silence in response. Losing patience at last, he sent one of the slave women to open the door and to investigate.

The old woman unlocked the door, slipped back the bolts, and cautiously peered in through a tiny crack; then, with an exclamation of surprise, she threw the door wide open and rushed into the room. "Poor little thing!" she cried, and, kneeling, raised Pokjumie's head from the rough stone floor into her lap.

The prisoner's breath came in choking gasps, the face was hot and flushed, and in the wide brown eyes there was no sign of reason or light of knowledge. She was indeed very ill. The dampness of the room and the lack of

nourishment had brought on a severe attack of pneumonia. For the time being she was out of the clutches of the monster Na.

The slave made a hurried report to the master. He had not meant to carry things this far, and was disappointed that she had so easily slipped away from him and that he must hunt new diversions. He ordered the woman to take the sick girl to her own room and care for her there until she was well.

It is a noticeable fact that those who gloat in cruelty over helpless ones in their power are always base cowards in their own lives. Na Sung Mung was no exception to this rule. He was a great coward. The unseen powers of darkness held sway over his mind, and he trembled at the bare mention of *tokgobies* (hobgoblins) and *quesin* (demons). Though not an ignorant man, he had all the superstitions of the ignorant lower classes. Perhaps it was his guilty conscience bearing witness to his many dark deeds that gave him such a sense of uneasiness. Great were his fear and

distress when the slave woman in charge of Pokjumie came to him several days later and informed him that the girl was dying.

"Dying? Not possible! Surely you are mistaken! But if she is, she must not die on my premises. Who can tell what personal and financial ruin might be brought upon me by the evil spirits if I were to allow this stranger to die within my gates? But you are too easily frightened, old woman. Come; I will see for myself."

One glance at the fever-racked frame told him that the woman was right, and this was confirmed by the irregular, difficult breathing. To increase his uneasiness, her incoherent utterances resolved themselves into these, to him, fearful words: "O Jesus of the Christians' Bible, save me, I beseech thee! I will trust thee! Save me, Jesus!"

As he stood outside the door of the tiny room, fear and consternation written all over his face, a little servant girl ran up, out of

breath and with the appearance of having a communication of importance to make.

“Master, master, the great foreign doctor from the city is passing through the village. He is said to have miracle-working power. Perhaps he could heal this woman.”

The suggestion was taken eagerly and several messengers were sent, in the name of their powerful master, to implore the wonderful doctor to come and heal the sick.

After about an hour the servants returned, and with them came the physician, a young, almost boyish-looking foreigner. He was very tall and as straight as an Indian. His clean-shaven face was kindly and gentle and at the same time strong. The clear steel-gray eyes were piercingly bright, and as he examined his patient his questions were put in a firm, businesslike tone of authority which commanded respect and filled the bystanders with a sense of his importance and ability. Finally he raised himself from the kneeling position beside the sick girl, who lay on the stone floor, and, shak-

ing his head sadly, addressed Na, who stood outside looking in at the door: "She is very ill. I fear that I can do but little for her. This sickness would demand constant attention from me and careful nursing by one who understood its symptoms."

The doctor stood looking down at the young sufferer, and his heart was filled with pity. He could not get used to these scenes of suffering, although he saw them daily. The squalid, dingy surroundings served but to throw into contrast the delicate beauty of the girl; for she was still wondrously attractive as she lay with her flushed face framed in the ebony hair.

"I wish that I might help her," thought the doctor to himself; "for, if I mistake not, there is some story of cruelty behind all this." Then, as if by inspiration, came the thought which he voiced: "Now, if I only had her in Songdo, in my hospital there, I could care for her. But that is a long journey," he added doubtfully.

But Na had grasped at the suggestion as a drowning man at a straw. "If I can only get

rid of the dying creature," he thought, "what a relief! And the consequent wrath of the evil spirits will be upon the foreigner." Then he spoke aloud: "Yes, yes, great doctor! That is a noble plan, and I will pay you big money to heal her. Here we have chairs, coolies, and many servants. She could be easily carried to the city."

After some hesitation, the doctor decided to take her. "For," thought he, "she is sure to die if left to the care of that ignorant, incompetent old woman. It is a hard trip, but I have one chance in a hundred to pull her through. I fear there is an abscess in that left side. Evidently it would be a mercy to take her away. I believe there is a pitiful story here."

Arrangements were soon made, and that evening, on its march to the city, there were added to the doctor's little procession two coolies carrying an improvised stretcher.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOUSE OF HEALING.

PATIENT effort and tireless watching on the part of doctor and nurse were proving the value of modern science in saving a human life. They believed that at last the crisis was past, and that there was room to hope for the complete recovery of Pokjumie. She lay now on the spotless white bed in a bright, airy room of the big hospital. The cheery little Korean nurse moved to and fro with noiseless step, putting things "to rights" for the day, and, turning, found the large, bright eyes of her patient fixed on her. For the first time she looked rational. There was no fear in the eyes' brown depths, only wonder and surprise, as she met the reassuring smile on the kind nurse's face and asked in a low, weak voice: "Did Jesus of the Christians' Bible hear my prayer?"

The little nurse did not know her story; but

she had unbounded faith in her Saviour, and so she felt that she was telling the truth as she softly patted the shining braids and answered: "Yes, I am sure he did if you prayed to him; he always does."

Turning over on her side, the patient murmured softly: "*Se un how. Se un how.* [I have a cool breeze blowing on the inside.] I am so comfortable and peaceful." Then she quietly fell asleep.

.
Each day found the patient some stronger and showing more interest in her surroundings and in the "Jesus doctrine."

By the time the November winds had brought the brown leaves from the trees she was able to sit up, though still very weak and white.

One morning, as she sat by the window in her comfortable room, she heard the soft notes of a hymn floating upward from the hall below, where the nurses and the convalescent patients

were having morning prayers. She listened eagerly to the sweet words:

All the way my Saviour leads me,
What have I to ask beside?

She strained every nerve to hear, but no other words save the repeated couplet at the end of each verse came to her ears:

For I know, whate'er befalls me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

Over and over she repeated the words, slowly and thoughtfully; and then, with a face aflame with light and joy, she exclaimed: "How beautiful to know that Jesus cares! And I know that 'Jesus doeth all things well.' "

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN DREAMS COME TRUE.

CHANG TAB YOUNG felt that again he was a man. The first weeks of treatment at the hospital had been full of keenest suffering, but such as could be borne ; for he had learned to lean upon One whose strength was greater than human weakness. Gradually and painfully but surely the opium fiend that had conquered him had in turn been conquered.

To-day, as he sat in the anteroom of the doctor's office, his heart was full of thanksgiving ; for he was grateful for all that had been done for him. He had been in the office and the doctor had dismissed him, telling him that he might return to his home as soon as he desired. But still he lingered in the waiting room, listening to the eager words of the old class leader as he talked to the newcomers

about the Father's love. At the thought of going back to his home the heart of the dismissed patient, however, was strangely disconsolate. How could he go alone? His face buried in his hands, he sat musing on the deserted homestead.

The kind old class leader, seeing his evident distress, touched him gently on the shoulder and said: "Come, my friend; let us walk out under the trees. The grove and lawn are very beautiful now in their autumn dress."

The hospital was situated in the midst of a large chestnut grove, and together the two men walked in silence to the top of the hill behind the building. There they halted and looked across the rich valley stretching out below them. Here and yonder were men cutting the long, dead grass and piling it high on the jiggies by their sides for winter fuel. Down in the valley the ever-present washerwomen were beating their linen by the stream of water, and the thud and "tat-tat" of their paddles came

distinctly to the ears of the men. Far away beyond the valley rose the North Mountain, deep blue in the hazy light of late afternoon.

The class leader, a tender-hearted, kindly old soul, was by some called meddlesome; but really his great interest in the affairs of others grew out of a loving desire to help them. He could not bear to see another unhappy if he could possibly set things straight. He did not know Chang's story, and ignorantly stumbled on the very thing to pierce the already aching heart.

"Chang Su Bang [Mr. Chang], you look very unhappy and burdened. I am sure that you have some great trouble; but our trials are never so bad but that they might be worse. Now, for instance, I am sure your griefs could not be so bad as those of a woman I heard about last night. She had been run away from her home by a mean, angry husband. She had then been sold to a drunken wretch whose cruel treatment resulted in a severe sickness. Somehow under Providence she was brought

to this hospital. O, she had reason to be very sad! Yet she has found deep peace and even joy in the love of the Saviour."

During this recital of another's woes Chang had sat down on a large, flat stone. He was deeply touched and his heart was filled with painful memories; but, after all, this was such a common occurrence in Korea that he never dreamed that he was listening to his own story. His wistful eyes were filled with longing and remorse. It did not occur to him that for many days Pokjumie had been under the same roof that had sheltered him.

The old man by his side continued in his droning voice: "So it has come about that this girl wants to be a nurse and stay in the hospital. You, too, will find more comfort if you think less of your own trouble and try to help others."

Chang was one of the old class leader's converts, and he felt that he had the right to instruct and admonish him; and so he continued, not heeding the pain in the other's face: "If

this little girl can think of others, a big, strong man like you can certainly forget himself. Why, that girl is so young and tiny that they still call her by the pet baby name she had in her father's house before she was married. They have never dropped her baby name," he repeated musingly, "and they still call her Pok-jumie."

"Pokjumie?" shrieked Chang, staggering to his feet. "Pokjumie? Then, by heaven, man, that's my wife!" Without another word he turned and rushed madly down the hill.

The old man, panting and breathless, caught up with him as Chang was fumbling with the door latch. "Stop, man! Where are you going?" the old man panted. "Don't you know it would be highly improper for a man to enter the women's department? You wait. The doctor will have the nurse to tell your wife, and she will meet you in the reception room. Wait there for her."

Chang grasped his sleeve as he passed him, and with unsteady voice said: "Please have

them tell her that I was very sorry for my haste and cruelty, and searched the whole countryside for many weeks. Then I gave it up as hopeless. I implore her forgiveness.”

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Pokjumie stood by the window looking out at the soft blue folds of the Dragon Ridge as it mounted higher and higher and then melted into the deep violet of the mountains. Her eyes had in them a far-away look. She did not see the beauty of the scene spread before her, for she was thinking of the past—yes, and of the future. She returned to the present with a start as the nurse opened the door and quietly entered.

“Sit down, Pokjumie. I have some words to make to you.”

The girl sank into a chair and listened listlessly. “*Mal has e o*” (Say on), she replied, without noticing the eager interest in the manner of the other.

“Pokjumie, would you like to see your husband again?” the nurse asked gently.

"O, has he come?" she cried. "I knew that he would come, for I have been praying that he would." She had risen in her eagerness, all the lassitude gone now and her eyes shining with their old-time brilliancy.

"Your prayer has been answered. He is here, and is waiting for you in the reception room. He says to ask your forgiveness for his cruelty; that he was very sorry and searched for you many weeks before he gave it up."

"I knew it!" she cried, and fell upon her knees to give thanks to her Heavenly Father.

The two women mingled their tears and prayers in joyful thanksgiving. At last they arose with radiant faces.

Womanlike, Pokjumie thought of her ruffled hair and flushed face. She would not go down to meet her lord without looking her best. So hastily and with shaking hands she put on the new dress given her by the friends at the hospital—a simple, plain gown of cotton, very different from those she had worn in her old home, but one which made the delicate,

aristocratic lines of her face more noticeable. The mantle of sadness which she had worn so long had dropped from her, and as she stood ready to descend the stairs she was a joyous, eager girl, her heart filled with loving anticipation.

"She doesn't look old enough to have eaten eighteen rice cakes,"¹ smiled the little nurse to herself as she conducted her former patient in the direction of the reception room.

All this time the impatient Chang Tab Young had been waiting in restless suspense. His heart was still filled with fears and anxiety as he paced restlessly to and fro like a caged tiger. "After all, this may not be Pokjumie," he muttered hoarsely. "Why didn't I ask some sensible questions? I acted like a crazy person."

So for what seemed an age, though really

¹The number of New Year's rice cakes measures one's age. To have eaten eighteen rice cakes means that she was eighteen years old. The question to a child, "How old are you?" would be literally, "How many rice cakes have you eaten?"

not more than an hour, he walked the floor, perplexed, uncertain, and tormented by the possibility that, after all, he had not found the one he sought. At length he heard the soft patter of feet, the swish of a woman's skirt, and he stood with clenched hands and quick breath awaiting the opening of the door.

The knob was turned slowly and with much hesitation; and then, framed in the doorway, he saw the bright face of his beloved. Her soft, love-lit eyes were filled with happy tears. Beautiful she was and as proud as a queen. She took one step toward him and held out her arms, while a smile of infinite tenderness played about her lips.

"Pokjumie!" he cried, bounding forward. "It is Pokjumie! My Pokjumie!"

The sorrowful past, with its suffering and woe, was almost forgotten in the rapturous present, and the sweetness of the hour was made the sweeter by those faint memories of the bitter past.

There were many explanations made. Both

told their stories of the past months. Then at last the wife lifted her head from her husband's breast and, looking up into his beaming face, exclaimed: "Best of all it is to know that 'Jesus doeth all things well.' "

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